



December 11, 2018

Michigan House of Representatives  
Committee on Government Operations, Chair Lee Chatfield

RE: Testimony on Senate Bill 1197 (S-2) – Authorizing a Utility Tunnel in the Straits of Mackinac

Chair Chatfield and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding Senate Bill 1197. Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council wishes to express our opposition to the substitute of Senate Bill 1197.

As a means of introduction, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, founded in 1979, is a nonprofit organization based in Petoskey, Michigan whose purpose is to protect, restore, and enhance water resources, including inland lakes, rivers, wetlands, groundwater, and the Great Lakes. I was appointed by Michigan's Governor to serve on the Michigan Pipeline Safety Advisory Board and have spent the last three years dedicated to improving protections for the public health, safety and welfare of Michigan citizens and the environment related to the transportation of liquid petroleum products through major pipelines within the state.

First and foremost, it is important to realize that a tunnel has not been recommended by the Michigan Pipeline Safety Advisory Board, nor through any independent Alternative Analyses. A tunnel has only been deemed feasible and further geological assessments are required to ensure a tunnel is truly feasible in the Straits of Mackinac. Other alternatives have also been deemed feasible that could be implemented with little to no impact to Michigan's economy.

Replacement of Enbridge Energy's Line 5 under the Straits of Mackinac is not a wise decision for the future of Michigan's environment and economy. Replacement of Line 5 in the Straits will not eliminate the risk to the public trust waters of the Great Lakes. The inland portions of Line 5 will still remain, with nearly 400 sites where it crosses a waterbody in Michigan.

Of particular note, Line 5 will still traverse across the Upper Peninsula, along the U.S. 2 corridor, where there are a number of direct tributaries to Lake Michigan. A leak or rupture along this portion could still result in an oil spill into Lakes Michigan-Huron and the Straits of Mackinac, and the same containment and recovery difficulties would exist. U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) personnel and emergency managers both point to the stretch of the pipeline along U.S. Highway 2 near Lake Michigan's northern shore as their worst-case scenario, citing a combination of less robust technology such as pipeline wall thickness and monitoring equipment, as well as

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higher vulnerability to an errant strike and potential access problems for containment and cleanup equipment, in addition to difficult terrain and environment for cleanup activities.

The inland portions can pose just as great, if not greater threat, due to the basic construction, operation, and maintenance of the line. The wall thickness of the inland pipeline is significantly less. It is 0.281 inches thick versus 0.813 inches at the Straits. Along with a thinner pipeline, it operates at a higher pressure. In addition, it has a side seam, which the Straits portion of pipe does not have. This seam can be subject to stress cracking and could cause the inland pipe to be more vulnerable. The inland portion is also not subject to the same inspection frequencies. If you look at historic dent summary, you will see that there are more dent features total and features per mile inland than in the Straits. Additionally, this is historically where Line 5 has experienced leaks and ruptures proving the vulnerability and risk of the inland portion of Line 5.

Therefore, simply replacing the Straits portion of the pipeline ultimately fails to eliminate the risk to the Great Lakes and Michigan's public trust waters.

Lastly, Senate Bill 1197 (S-2) is highly irresponsible with the long-term health of the Great Lakes by requiring a board that is not even created to be formed and enter into agreements for construction, maintenance, operation, and decommission of a utility tunnel in less than a months' time. The current administration has been evaluating Line 5 since 2014 and the Michigan Pipeline Safety Advisory Board has been researching the matter for the last three years. It is unreasonable and reckless to expect a newly formed board to enter into binding agreements dictating the future of Line 5 for the next 100 years in just a couple weeks.

On behalf of the board, staff, and members of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, we urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 1197 (S-2).

On behalf of the board, staff, and members of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, we thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.

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